Volume XV Chicago, Ill., August, 1938 Number 5

The Liberalist

Churches come and go, but there has ever been but one religion. The only religion is conscience in action. The social conscience sees that wherever man walks there is the Holy Land. It raises the cross of a new crusade against infidels, who deny the divine right of the people, that the will of God shall be done on earth as in heaven. It insists that every question between men is a religious question, a question of moral economy before it becomes one of political economy.

—**Man the Social Creator**, Henry Demarest Lloyd.

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The Peoples Church

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THE LIBERALIST

Preston Bradley ..... Editor
Grace Thayer Bradley ..... Associate Editor

Volume XV Chicago, Ill., August, 1938 Number 5

MEDITATION

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"In the moments of our deliberation and worship together when to us who have learned to love these words which we have used and spoken so long and so often but which are always new to us in the beauty of this worship, we would ask, as the very deep petition of our hearts this morning that there might be an opportunity for the truth and reality of these words of our beautiful and impressive litany which will arouse in some heart such a deep longing and ardent desire to find life something which life is not now, that there may be inspiration for the rehabilitation and the reconstruction of their lives. Perhaps, they are very much disillusioned this morning; perhaps, they are very sad and broken and life seems very empty. If they will only give us the opportunity, might something, some influence, so intangible, that we cannot locate it, some inner spiritual vitality, not perhaps a specific word or anything said, but the accumulated experience of the personality of the service itself. Might the deeper and more hidden influence of righteousness and truth and beauty and love find its way to every disillusioned heart. Maybe in some little home there has been unkindness and quarreling and bickering this day and things have gone badly, might the storm pass. Perhaps some very lonely heart quite removed from home and loved ones and friends is listening in a room somewhere that is all the home they know, perhaps someone even in some palatial home with the refinements of wealth and the security of fine social relationships, but deep in their hearts a gnawing sob and aching emptiness, if such a one is listening, might they, too, be inspired.

And those homes where this week we have stood by the side of their loved ones, those several homes where we have shared their grief at an open grave, we know that they are listening, some of them are here, and we want them to be helped.

O, in this moment of sacred beauty, cleanse, purify all of our hearts, heal broken bodies and bless every agency being used in the healing; quiet turbulent souls, bring them strength and that power which comes to us all if we will only open our hearts and our minds for the infiltration of Thy Love, and then the healing beauty and the permanent remedy of the perfect prayer will be felt in every heart:

'Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name . . . . . "

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"THY WILL BE DONE—BUT NOT NOW"

•

Sermon by Dr. Preston Bradley, Pastor of The Peoples Church of Chicago, April 3, 1938

"Do you believe Jesus was the son of God? Do you believe the Bible is an infallible book, an authority in every field of human knowledge? Do you believe that Jesus was God? Do you believe that he was born of the virgin Mary? Do you believe that he suffered and died and descended into hell and the third day he rose again from the dead? Do you believe that he was everything which his friends say he was? Do you believe in what is usually accepted as the orthodox conception of Jesus of Nazareth? Do you believe in the historical development of the ancient Scriptures until they reached a point of accuracy and inspiration which could not be questioned or denied? Do you believe these things?

As I ask these questions, there are millions of human minds who have given consideration to these questions who would answer 'No.' There are other millions who would answer 'Yes.' And the question of what they believe in regard to some of the questions which I have just asked you they would consider a determining factor in their religion. I propose, if it is possible for me this morning, to go on from this thesis and take up the reality of the truth of Christianity quite remote from the theology which has grown up about Christianity.

I am not interested this morning in your answers to these questions; I am not interested in how you would react to them; I am interested in what you consider to be the 'will' of Jesus for the operation of your life and for the better realization of a finer life for humanity. In other words, I am prepared this morning to utterly forget, for the purposes of my idea, to forget absolutely the theological implications found in the things that people say that they believe about these problems. I propose, if it is possible, to develop a consciousness and a response to the imperatives of Jesus, as he evidenced those imperatives in his own personal and social contacts. I am not interested in a theology about Jesus; I am interested in a pragmatic, ethical and powerful inspiration coming from his life for my life and for the life of the world.

Whatever else Jesus was, his most severe critics cannot accuse him of not being a realist. I know he has been called a theorist, and I know that Christianity, from its philosophical content, has been attacked by some very superior minds on the basis that it is an unworkable and an impractical religion. I am quite familiar with that attitude. I challenge it! I do not believe it is tenable. I do not believe that it is representative of the main imperative of the life of the Galilean. This morning I am tremendously interested in thinking of the message of Jesus, the desire which grew out of his deep sensitiveness and fundamental love of all humanity. That Jesus was inclusive, again his most bitter foe dare not deny. He gave evidence of that inclusiveness once when he uttered that magnificent statement: 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' That was inclusiveness 'all men unto me.' No matter how we may disagree about his origin, no matter what the theological distinctions might be, the fact of the matter is that for nearly twenty centuries those who accept the fundamental orthodoxy associated with the life and per-

sonality of the Teaher have been repeating words and a very old prayer — you heard those words this morning, I framed them on my lips 'Thy will be done.' What is the matter that after twenty centuries when the millions of the world who call his name, who bow their heads at the mention of his name, who fall on their knees in the presence, what is the matter that this old, old, old prayer 'Thy will be done' has gone unanswered until today, while I speak, the moral values which have grown up in civilization are more nearly bankrupt and probably at their lowest ebb? When vast multitudes of the world are concerning themselves not with the will of the Dreamer from the hillsides of Galilee, but are concerning themselves with **their** will and the modern emphasis is not **'Thy** will be done' the modern emphasis is **My** will be done, and the world is filled, while I speak, with men and women everywhere throughout the entire world, at home and abroad, with men and women who are substituting in their hearts, though their lips say 'Thy will be done' in their hearts they are substituting **'My** will be done' for 'Thy will be done.' Christianity, to retain a semblance of its historic power as an ethical religion inspiring human action in a properly regulated human society must re-think its concept of values on the basis of **the will of the Master.** It can no longer survive if it is deflated, deflected from this revaluation. It is being attacked in Russia to the extent of extinction and there is a whole generation of youngsters today approaching maturity in Russia, a whole generation of them to whom the very word 'Jesus' is something to be despised, something to be laughed at, something to be cynical over, something of no power at all. A whole generation on a great continent that has one acre out of every seven of this earth's surface, a continent today, one acre out of every seven of the tillable soil of the earth is within the borders of Russia, and in that nation today the name of this man is an epithet of derision, of impotency, of hopelessness, of meaninglessness, of nothingness! What has happened to Russia is likewise happening in Germany, and the substitution of a modern pagan religion in a great people and in a truly great country today, and within the past week I read the new marriage ceremony that the young Germans in Germany are using for the performance of the marriage ceremony, and in that nation there is a constant, and I am ready to grant from the point of view of the totalitarian philosophy, a perfectly logical program of eliminating the will of Jesus from the people. It is assuming proportions that the ancient Teutons and the early Lutherans of that great nation would hardly believe, but it is happening now in the assault which is being made.

Therefore, upon the will of Jesus, might we not, to our own advantage and for our own inspirations, give a momentary thought to what that will is? Is the fault the fault of the will when we pray our prayers and we say 'Thy will be done' and it is not done and we don't do anything to complete it and we expend very little energy in the very final achievement of the performance of the will, 'Thy will be done' and it is not done? Don't we ask why? Ought we not to ask why? Take my own father, or yours, and as a child when your father asked you to do something and you knew it was the will of your father and you had a reason if you did not do it and that reason was involved in the distinction between your desire to perform the will of your father and the will itself. The disobedient child is always the child who substitutes his will for the will of the parent. Dare I make the analogy? Dare I, in the interest of logic and of good thinking, dare I say to you and say to myself that the reason we

are not functioning and helping to make a realization in the affairs of earth of the will of the Master is because we are so self-willed that we are ready to substitute our will for the larger and more perfect will? Is that your difficulty, is that my difficulty, has that been the difficulty of the world?

Cast a fleeting glance backward to 1914. Every nation of the world in that great explosion, the reverberations of which are still being felt everywhere in the world and probably will be ten centuries dying out, in that far-off year 1914, what about the prayer? The King of Britain was the head of the Anglican Church and every day millions of prayers, and those prayers resounded 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,' the Kaiser of Germany, the head of the great Lutheran Church of Germany, and every one of the prayers and every one of the pulpits 'Thy will de done.' In Austria-Hungary, the sovereigns knelt at the foot of their Roman Catholic altars and every prayer was the Pater Noster 'Our Father who art in heaven.' While in America a President was in the White House, who was brought up as a boy in a Presbyterian minister's home and heard his father praying from the pulpit of the little church 'Our Father who art in heaven.' **The whole world, with the exception of Japan, was praying in 1914 'Thy will be done on earth' and you know, and I know, that it was not done. Don't dare stand and say that all this is the Will of the Master! If you say that, I am quite sure you don't know Him intimately!** Don't tell me that he glories in the slaughter of little children! He said once 'It were better for a millstone to be hanged about your neck than that you should hurt one of these little ones.' Don't try to authenticate destruction and mutilation of human life by speaking of it as 'his will.' **IT IS NOT HIS WILL THAT ANY OF THE LEAST OF THESE SHOULD PERISH!** What did happen that that will was thwarted? How did this world lose its way? Why have we gone so far astray? Why have we substituted guns and ammunition and hate and racial warfare and religious controversy — what has happened to this world of ours — THY WILL BE DONE — BUT NOT NOW!

If I were to go to every member of this fine audience this morning and say to them, just talking privately with you, casually, in a conversational way, and say to you, 'Do you believe in peace? Do you believe in your fellowmen? Do you believe in being a friend? Do you believe in honor? Do you believe in kindness? Do you believe in tolerance? Do you believe in being a good citizen? Do you believe in these things?' Is there an atheist in this audience who is an atheist in the denial of those attributes? Not one! Not one! I have met some atheists, so-called in a theological sense, who were much better Christians than some Christians I know. I might go and say to each one of you, 'Why, yes, I believe in them,' of course you do! And then I say, 'What are you doing about it now?' and you would say, some of you, 'O, well, Doctor, we cannot do anything about it now. I believe in these things, but we cannot do anything about it, it is all out of our hands now, we will have to postpone it.' 'Thy will be done' and most everybody that says that prayer has put in parenthesis right along side of it 'Thy will be done—but not now.'

My friends, we had better be about the business of making articulate in human society that **will now!** We had better be beginning now! At any moment there may be a flash of lightening from the sky, at any moment some mighty outburst of a nation's fury, any moment now! What is your fortification for that moment? Dare any person in this audience, or any person listening

to me, indict, impute the Will of God? Is it God's will that there be hunger? I answer 'NO!' Is it God's will that there be unemployment? I answer 'No!' Is it God's will that there be tragedy and sorrow? I answer 'No!' Is it God's will that we have a depression? I answer 'No!' Is it God's will that we have a smash-up of civilization? I answer 'No!' Is it God's will that this world fail? I answer 'No!' Why then are we, as men and women, not functioning to make God's will a reality in human experience? Why not? I am not interested about your creed, the label you wear, the church you belong to, what your theory is in the field of theology; I am not interested in what you believe about baptism; I am not interested in these speculative aspects even though it is called the theology of self. I am not interested in these things. I ask every one of you, **DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOOD?** And you say 'Yes.' Then I ask you, why not unite, not in the conformity of belief, not in the uniformity of creeds, that will never be, but why not unite in the unity of one common effort to make this earth, here and now, the kingdom of God? Why not say 'Away with poverty, away with economic wrong, away with economic injustice, away with racial hatreds, away with these things that have brought us starvation and poverty and sadness and disease and frustration and broken hearts, away with them!' Why don't we stand in the dignity of our common manhood and womanhood and say, 'We are going to make this earth, here and now, the kingdom of God by functioning in co-operation with the will of God.' If we don't do that, there is no escape, there is no way out! You have tried everything, you have tried legislation, you have tried by electing these men, and then you have tried organization, you have tried spending money, you have tried mortgaging the future, you have tried centralization of everything, you have tried it all, **EXCEPT** the only final solution — **CO-OPERATING WITH GOD** to make this earth the kingdom of God — **THY WILL BE DONE HERE AND NOW!**

That's the Lenten thought to hurl at people these days! You cannot do it by merely intellectually clarifying the problems of theology. Here is a man who has a message, who has a life, who loved humanity, who was a realist, whose every solitary ethic can be made livable. I challenge any theological, philosophical, ethical statement of Jesus that cannot be made livable. He talks our language, he lived in our world, he knows when we are broken hearted, he wept, he knows what joy means, he was happy, he knows our world, he knows our life, and what would it be if, with the dominating imperative of that knowledge, we should all go to work on the task of making his kingdom come true? Christians, it were better that you never utter the Lord's Prayer than that you utter it and do not mean it. Better be silent than to make it a mere form or to mumble it like a few meaningless phrases.

When I was thinking of the thoughts which I wanted to bring to your hearts and minds this morning, I was thinking of the men and women whom I know who are insistent and persistent in doing that will and what a heartening example the mere memory of individually achieved happiness,—to be doing the will of God. Can you think of any greater happiness that any human heart could experience than the happiness derived from primarily co-operating to do the will of God? I do not know of any happiness like that. I know you have tried all other kinds of happiness and processes to be happy, I know we have tried this, that, and the other, but the most beatific expression upon any human face I have seen upon the faces of those people who are trying

to do the will of God. There is no happiness like that, always being kind, always treating people with consideration, always trying to advance the principles of friendship, always being honorable in their business associations, always being true to the loyalties of their lives, people that are projecting the will of the Infinite Good are the only happy people I know. Everybody else seems to be in constant irritation and in constant fury, and along comes someone who says 'Thy will be done NOW' and a smile lights their faces!

What would happen, do you think, if tomorrow noon, when the United States Congress convenes and the people come into the Senate and House Chambers and the galleries fill up for the great debates that will take place tomorrow, what do you think would happen if the Speaker of the House, when at twelve o'clock sharp he hits the desk with his gavel would say: 'The House will now come to order. Gentlemen of the House there will be a new member seated this morning, make way for Representative Jesus of Galilee,' and the gentle poet who loved humanity should walk down the House aisle and be sworn in and take the oath of office, what do you think would happen to the legislation to be enacted there if 'Thy will be done' should become a part of the legislation? The Cabinet is in session and serious matters are being considered concerning foreign matters, a war may be impending, secret documents arrive that are never entrusted to the air or telegraph but carried against the heart of the messenger from half way around the world. The Secretary has called a Cabinet meeting and is there, the President arrives and says: 'Good morning, gentlemen, I announce that before we open the deliberations of our important and serious session of this Cabinet today that I have appointed a new member and I will ask the Secretary to admit him while I introduce him,' and the door opens and in walks the Galilean peasant! What would happen when the war debate ensued, if this man could be really admitted to the table of the world's diplomats? **THY WILL BE DONE NOW!**

Men and women of this Church, men and women of this nation, it is time to stop our folly, it is time to stop our arguments, it is time to stop our discussions! Christianity is not an argument, Christianity is a WAY, and let us find the way while it is yet day, for a night may deepen so black that we may never find the way again! THY WILL BE DONE, dare you pray it and mean it? Dare I?"

Dr. Preston Bradley

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DR. BRADLEY'S BOOKS

In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the pastorate of Dr. Bradley, Bobbs-Merrill, Publishers of Indianapolis and New York published the last volume written by Dr. Bradley entitled "Power From Right Thinking." This book is dedicated to the congregation of the church and makes a lasting memento of the anniversary. The book may be purchased in any of the better book stores, and department store book sections in this country. If you are not near a book store orders may be sent direct to the publisher at Indianapolis.

The two former books: "Courage For Today" and "Mastering Fear" are also available. The price is $1.50 per volume. These three books contain the philosophy of our pastor which in the spoken word have inspired and helped so many people. They occupy a place all their own in inspirational contemporary literature.

RECORD OF JULY SERVICE BY REV. MR. CLARK, SUMMER ASSISTANT TO DR. BRADLEY

Weddings

July 2—Allen F. Sharpen and Eleanor Ruth Kollberg
July 9—John Plaskon and Pearl Buck
July 10—Jacob C. Fleischer and Marie L. Tillberg
July 17—La Vern Warren Marsh and Mary Irene Cohen

Funeral

July 8—Mrs. Amanda Goetz. Interment Waldheim Cemetery.

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HERE AND THERE

Word has been received of Dr. Bradley's safe arrival across the sea. He will return by way of Quebec and Mrs. Bradley is planning to meet him there upon his return, driving back to Minnesota through Canada and Northern Michigan. They will spend the remaining vacation days at "Black Duck Island" in Lake Vermilion.

Friends of Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas will be happy to learn that she was allowed by her physician to leave the Passavant hospital where she has been since January 6th and return to her home at 1732 Arthur Ave. Mrs. Thomas hopes to soon be able to walk with crutches, and then to progress to normal footing. She has been so exquisitely brave throughout her long months of suffering, never lacking cheerfulness and charm so that visitors marveled, well knowing she was suffering intensely even while she smiled at them. Everyone who knows her is glad for her to be home again, and sincerely hopes for her complete recovery.

The sad word has reached us of the passing August 10th of Mrs. Georgia Russell, at her sisters in New York state, where she has been since early in the spring. Mrs. Russell will be remembered for her pleasant smile by those who had only a bowing acquaintance with her in the church lobby. Many will remember her specially as the "Flower Chairman" a work in which she delighted for many years in the Peoples Church. When she was no longer able to carry on the work she remarked that when she passed on she would like to be remembered in The Peoples Church as "The Flower Lady", a title she had often been given by people not knowing her name. She will be missed by many friends and remembered for many kind acts.

Our Church Treasurer and Secretary Mr. and Mrs. Thos. A. Harrison, have enjoyed a short but pleasant vacation cruising from Detroit to Buffalo on the City of Detroit III, visiting Niagara then driving down through Canada back to Chicago. Even during the summer there is a great deal of mail and work in the church office, and to these two indefatigable and devoted workers a holiday must have been most welcome.

Now that "it is August" it is only a matter of weeks when we will all be back, and the Church doors open again for Sunday services.

G. T. B.

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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH

No mention has been made of the Annual Meeting in the Liberalist—for no reason of slight to the Annual Meeting, but the editors lay things aside to use in the summer editions when there is not much Church news to offer. So when it is time to make up the "copy" for a new Liberalist the folio is opened and an article or memoranda or announcement that has been in waiting is brought forth for the current number.

The Annual Meeting took place on the evening of March 14th in Channing Hall. The hall was well

filled but by no means was there the crowd there has been when the Annual Meeting is preceded by a dinner. Why is it, pray tell me, that Church people come out in large numbers when there is something to eat, but find it easy to stay home when a meeting of interest to their Church takes place without dinner? Well those who stayed home really should have come because after the business was transacted reports read, election taken place and the program enjoyed, coffee and very delicious cake was served and everyone sat around visiting over the coffee cups for an hour or more.

Annual reports were read of all allied organizations as well as the annual report of the Church and the various Church committees. These reports were interesting to those truly interested in the work of the Church.

Dr. Bradley spoke quite briefly but with a depth of feeling in expressing his gratitude for the work of all the officers and committee chairmen who help to carry on the work of The Peoples Church, and for all the members also who make the work possible. Mr. Chas. Bradley president of the Mens' Club lead the audience in singing a few songs during the period when the board of trustees retires to another room for a board meeting of a few minutes duration, which is a necessary part of the Annual Meeting. Mrs. Walter Hermsdorf was invited by Dr. Bradley to take the Chair during this time. Mrs. Bradley was asked to make a few remarks, and then as Dr. Bradley and the trustees returned Mr. J. Charles Gilbert was introduced and sang, delighting the audience so greatly they would not allow him to stop until he had sung twice more.

Report was then made of the election and the board meeting (the report of the secretary follows) and then the meeting adjourned for the social hour and refreshments.

BOARD MEETING—MARCH 14, 1938

After the reading of the reports at the Annual Meeting, the Board retired for the election of Officers and the appointing of Chairmen, and it was regularly moved and seconded that the same Officers be retained for another year; namely:

President, Mr. Walter H. Hermsdorf

Vice-President, Mrs. J. J. Reynolds

Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Thos. A. Harrison

Church Secretary, Mrs. May H. Harrison

Finance Committee:

Mr. Thos. A. Harrison, Chairman
Mr. C. K. Anderson
Mr. E. L. Roubinek, Jr.

Church Service:

Mr. E. L. Roubinek, Jr., Chairman
All members of the Church Board of Trustees

Auditing Committee:

Mr. Wm. M. Stickney, Chairman
Mrs. J. J. Reynolds

Social Committee:

Mrs. J. J. Reynolds, Chairman
Mr. C. W. Denicke
Mr. G. U. Gairing
Mrs. W. E. Pape
Mrs. C. W. Denicke
Mrs. Frank Bryan
Mrs. W. H. Hermsdorf
Mrs. Chas. Roberts

Membership Committee:

Mr. E. L. Roubinek, Jr., Chairman
Mr. C. O. Garey
Miss Irene Wolf
Mr. Ernest Janson
Mrs. Alice Pearson

Committee on Contributions and Pledges:

Mr. Walter H. Hermsdorf, Chairman
Mrs. May H. Harrison
Mr. G. U. Gairing
Mr. Wm. Emrich
Mrs. H. B. Hunter

There being no further business to transact, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted
May H. Harrison,
Assistant Secretary.

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"YOUR CORRECT ADDRESS PLEASE"

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One of the most difficult tasks which confronts the church office is to keep our filing system of addresses up to date. May first and October first to many Chicagoans and others means "moving time." It is not infrequent that some member of the church or radio listener will ask, "Why didn't I receive the church letter or some other communication from the church office?" On inquiry it would be established that the church had never been notified of a change in address. On a list which includes nearly 7000 names the postage item is considerable. We are asking your wholehearted co-operation in advising the church office of your correct address. If you did not receive a letter from the pastor in the month of June will you kindly write or phone the church office and make sure that it has your proper address? This action on your part will be greatly appreciated by the pastor and the office. Our list is a very valuable one. The church prizes it highly and always considers it strictly confidential. Several overtures have been made in the past to secure a copy of our mailing list. All such are immediately refused. The list is the property of the church and will never be used except for legitimate church purposes. Please help us bring it up to date at once. For the number of names on our membership list and radio list we have a fairly accurate file but we desire it to be nearer perfect. Will you attend to this right now while it is in your mind? Thank you!

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THE BAZAAR

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"Time marches on!" It is not too early to remind all the members and friends of The Peoples Church that before you can wink the Annual Bazaar will be in the offing! It will be held the first week in December. Does that seem far away? Not too far to begin to get ready for it. Vacation days pass more quickly than any others, you know. You read —you fish—you paddle a canoe—you traipse about in an automobile maybe—you play golf or tennis or bridge — you dream and watch the waves roll in or the clouds sail in a blue sky—you eat and sleep and loaf more than usual — you yawn and laugh and watch the sunset — and another day has passed—then another—and a week glides by without warning—then a month—and one day you will look out in the morning and see white frost on the porch roof and then maybe you'll realize the summer has gone and the Bazaar just around the corner! So — begin to plan what you will do for it—and start right in! Specially ladies who are putting up jelly and jam and fruits and pickles—set aside some on a shelf to send to the Bazaar, will you? And you who like to do hand work—have some "pick-up work" you can take to the porch or when you go visiting, that you intend for the Bazaar; you will put so much fun and laughter and pleasure into it, it is sure to bring a good sale—and success to The Peoples Church Bazaar!

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH

"The purpose of the church is to deal in plain terms with the supreme things in human life as measured by the rational conclusions of science and history. It seeks to promote a conception of nature, history and the meaning of life in accordance with the facts of experience and with the progress of growing knowledge. It is essentially religious, not in the traditional but in the scientific and ethical sense of the word. It regards religion as spiritual energy directing itself toward the enrichment of the individual life and the perfection of the social order. This church assumes the right of every one to think his or her own thoughts, and expects the greatest progress to follow from entire intellectual liberty and perfect freedom of judgment. It welcomes to its membership all who wish to co-operate in making a world which shall be enlightened by knowledge, guided by reason and animated by good-will."

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LAWRENCE AVE., Near Sheridan Rd.

Sundays—10:45 A. M.

Affiliated with: American Unitarian Association, Boston Western Unitarian Conference, Chicago; National Federation of Religious Liberals, Chicago.

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THE LIBERALIST

Published monthly by The Peoples Church.
Preston Bradley ..... Editor
Grace Thayer Bradley ..... Associate Editor
Mrs. Thos. A. Harrison ..... Subscription Mgr.
941 Lawrence Ave. Longbeach 6878

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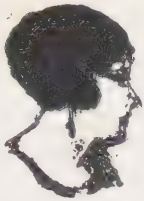

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